

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7640

INFO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMB*SSY SOFIA

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL POZNAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 WARSAW 0776

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, PL, VT

SUBJECT: ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI VISITS WARSAW

1. SUMMARY: ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI SPENT FEBRUARY 4-6 IN WARSAW AS AN OFFICIAL GUEST OF FOREIGN MINISTER OLSZOWSKI WHO VISITED THE VATICAN LAST NOVEMBER. ALTHOUGH CASAROLI'S VISIT HAD BEEN PRESAGED AS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH THE VATICAN, THERE IS NO INDICATION HOW MUCH IT CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE CREATION OF A SATISFACTORY MODUS VIVENDI BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND STATE IN POLAND, WHICH REMAINS A PREREQUISITE FOR SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT IN WARSAW-VATICAN TIES. DURING HIS VISIT, WHICH GOT SUBSTANTIAL MEDIA PLAY, INCLUDING PUBLICATION BY THE CENTRAL PRESS OF TOASTS EXCHANGED AT DINNER, CASAROLI MET SEVERAL TIMES WITH OLSZOWSKI AND MFA OFFICIALS AND WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS. HE ALSO MET WITH
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EDUCATION MINISTER JERZY KUBERSKI. THE SECRETARY OF THE

POLISH EPISCOPATE WAS INCLUDED IN CEREMONIES ATTENDING THE VISIT, BUT CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI APPARENTLY REMAINED DISCRETELY OUT OF TOWN, BECOMING CASAROLI'S HOST ONLY UPON COMPLETION OF THE OFFICIAL PORTION OF THE VISIT FEBRUARY 6. END SUMMARY.

2. CASAROLI WAS MET AT THE AIRPORT BY OLSZOWSKI, ALEKSANDER SKARZYNSKI, DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, AND BISHOP DABROWSKI, SECRETARY OF THE POLISH EPISCOPATE. ACCOMPANYING CASAROLI, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, WERE ARCHBISHOP LUIGI POGGI, PAPAL NUNCIO FOR SPECIAL MISSIONS, FATHER ANDRZEJ MARIA DESKUR, CHAIRMAN OF THE PAPAL COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL INFORMATION, AND FATHER GABRIEL MONTALVO, ADVISOR IN THE COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH.

3. IN ADDITION TO DISCUSSIONS AT THE MFA, THE FIRST DAY'S ACTIVITIES INCLUDED A WREATH-LAYING AT THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER'S TOMB AND A DINNER HOSTED BY OLSZOWSKI. POLISH GUESTS THERE INCLUDED PZPR CENTRAL COMMITTEE SECRETARY STANISLAW KANIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE SEJM FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMISSION WINCENTY KRASKO, EDUCATION MINISTER KUBERSKI, AND SKARZYNSKI AND DABROWSKI.

4. CASAROLI BEGAN THE SECOND DAY OF HIS VISIT BY SAYING MORNING MASS AT THE EPISCOPATE INFORMATION OFFICE BUILDING (THE FORMER PAPAL NUNCIO'S OFFICE), WHICH HAS BEEN FLYING POLISH AND VATICAN FLAGS DURING THE VISIT. FURTHER TALKS AT THE MFA AND A MEETING WITH SKARZYNSKI ROUNDED OUT THE DAY. CASAROLI HOSTED A DINNER FOR OLSZOWSKI THAT EVENING, AND THEY COMPLETED THEIR TALKS THE NEXT DAY, FEBRUARY 6.

5. IN THEIR PUBLIC STATEMENTS, BOTH SIDES WERE UNDERSTANDABLY GUARDED, ACCENTUATING THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF IMPROVING VATICAN-WARSAW RELATIONS IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF DETENTE, WHILE BROADLY OUTLINING THEIR OWN PREMISES FOR AN IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP. CASAROLI TOLD NEWSMEN AT THE AIRPORT WHEN HE ARRIVED THAT "DECISIONS TAKEN BY BOTH SIDES" DURING OLSZOWSKI'S EARLIER TALKS AT THE VATICAN OPENED A "NEW PAGE", PROMISING A TURNING POINT AND ACHIEVEMENT OF A NEW STAGE IN RELATIONS. IN HIS TOAST THAT NIGHT, OLSZOWSKI POINTED TO POLAND'S

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POSTWAR ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AS A TESTIMONY OF WORKING CLASS SUPPORT FOR REGIME POLICY. EMPHASIZING THE "UNITY OF POLISH SOCIETY", HE NOTED THAT THE REGIME HAS STRESSED THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FAITHFUL TO THE NATIONAL PROGRAM AND SEES A "POSITIVE PLACE" FOR CHURCH ACTIVITY. HE THEN CITED SEVERAL MORE OR LESS REGIME-ORIENTED OR SPONSORED GROUPS--PAX, THE SOCIETY OF LAY CATHOLICS, THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ASSOCIATION AND OTHERS. CONCLUDING, OLSZOWSKI

EXPRESSED THE CONVICTION THAT, "BASED ON RESPECT FOR THE SOCIALIST LEGAL-CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES OF OUR COUNTRY, WE CAN RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN POLAND AND THE HOLY SEE AND (BETWEEN) THE CHURCH AND STATE".

6. FOR HIS PART, CASAROLI STRESSED THE CHURCH'S SEARCH FOR ELEMENTS OF HARMONY IN WORLD RELATIONSHIPS TO ENSURE PEACE, WHICH HE DEPICTED AS ITS "PASSION". HOWEVER, HE ADVISED THAT IN THAT SEARCH THE CHURCH HAD NO INTENTION OF "BETRAYING" ITS CHARACTER OR NEGLECTING ITS RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS." IN THE SAME VEIN, HE CAUTIONED THAT IT DOES NOT SUFFICE TO APPEAL FOR PEACE WITHOUT CREATING THE PRE-REQUISITES FOR IT--"TRUTH, LIBERTY, JUSTICE, AND LOVE". FINALLY, EXPRESSING SATISFACTION WITH POSSIBILITIES FOR WARSAW-VATICAN RAPPROCHEMENT, WHICH THE HOLY SEE HAS LONG AWAITED, CASAROLI STRESSED THAT THE VATICAN'S UNDERLYING MOTIVATION REMAINS THE "HOPE OF A REAL AND COMPLETE NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS" BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND STATE IN POLAND.

7. THE BRIEF COMMUNIQUE, PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 7, INDICATES THE TALKS WILL BE CONTINUED IN ROME ON A DATE TO BE ESTABLISHED LATER. IT ALSO CONTAINS COMPARATIVELY EXTENSIVE EXPRESSIONS OF MUTUAL SUPPORT FOR DETENTE. HOWEVER, ON CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS, WHICH IT SAYS WERE THE SUBJECT OF "PENETRATING" DISCUSSIONS, THE COMMUNIQUE LIMITS ITSELF TO A STATEMENT OF THE REGIME'S WILL TO CONTINUE TALKS WITH THE VATICAN AND THE EPISCOPATE AND THE VATICAN'S INTEREST IN FURTHER DIALOGUE AND ITS CONVICTION OF THE /USEFULNESS" OF CHURCH-STATE CONTACTS.

8. ASSESSING THE VISIT FOR NEWSMEN ON FEBRUARY 6 FOLLOWING
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HIS LAST ROUND OF TALKS AT THE MFA, CASAROLI, ACCORDING TO SLOWO POWSZECHNE, SAID IT WAS "PREMATURE" TO TALK NOW ABOUT ESTABLISHMENT OF WARSAW-VATICAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE ADDED THAT HE REGARDED FURTHER PROSPECTS FOR MUTUAL RELATIONS WITH "MEASURED OPTIMISM".
DAVIES

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9. COMMENT: CASAROLI'S VISIT, WHICH HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED IN THE CENTRAL PRESS ON FEBRUARY 2, RECEIVED A MODICUM OF PRESS BUILD-UP IN THE FORM OF EXTENSIVE BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILES CARRIED IN THE REGIME-ORIENTED CATHOLIC DAILY SLOWO POWSZECHNE, ZYCIE WARSZAWY, AND OTHERS. THE FORMER WAXED UNUSUALLY EFFUSIVE, PREDICTING THAT CASAROLI'S VISIT--HIS FIRST "OFFICIAL" ONE TO A SOCIALIST COUNTRY--WOULD "CONTRIBUTE TO FULL NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE APOSTOLIC SEE AND THE PRL" WITH FAVORABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR POLISH CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS.

10. JUDGING FROM THE COMMUNIQUE AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY CASAROLI AND OLSZOWSKI, IT APPEARS THAT THEIR TALKS ADDRESSED FUNDAMENTALS, BUT WITHOUT CONCRETE RESULT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE POLISH EPISCOPATE HAD PREVIOUSLY CONVEYED ITS TALKING POINTS TO THE PAPAL ENVOY, INCLUDING PRIMARILY A DEMAND FOR FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE CHURCH'S RIGHT TO EXISTENCE AND TO FREE CONDUCT OF ITS RELIGIOUS

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FUNCTIONS PLUS AN APPEAL FOR INCREASED CHURCH CONSTRUCTION. THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE EPISCOPATE CONFERENCE FOLLOWING ITS JANUARY 23-24 PLENARY SESSION TREATS THESE

POINTS IN THE STRONGEST TERMS WE HAVE SEEN OF LATE, WHILE NEVERTHELESS POSITIVELY DEPICTING FOREIGN MINISTER OLSZOWSKI'S TALKS IN THE VATICAN LAST NOVEMBER AS A "FURTHER STEP" TOWARD THE CHURCH-STATE NORMALIZATION PROMISED BY THE REGIME.

11. CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI HIMSELF WAS IN GNIEZNO ON THE WEEKEND FOR CEREMONIES COMMEMORATING HIS TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY AS ARCHBISHOP THERE. HOWEVER, WITH COMPLETION OF THE OFFICIAL PORTION OF CASAROLI'S VISIT, THE CARDINAL HAS TAKEN OVER AS HOST FOR THE REST OF HIS STAY, THE DURATION OF WHICH HAS NOT BEEN DISCLOSED. ARCHBISHOP POGGI AND MONSIGNOR DESKUR VISITED KRAKOW AND ZESTOCHOWA FEBRUARY 7, RETURNING TO WARSAW THAT EVENING FOR A SOLEMN HIGH MASS CELEBRATED IN THE CATHEDRAL BY CASAROLI.

12. THE MASS, ATTENDED BY THE CHARGE AND AN EMBASSY OFFICER TOOK PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF PALPABLE EMOTIONAL TENSION. IT WAS STANDING ROOM ONLY IN THE CATHEDRAL WITH THE OVERFLOW FILLING THE STREETS OUTSIDE AND A NEIGHBORING CHURCH WHERE LOUD-SPEAKERS CARRIED THE SERVICE. TELEVISION CAMERAMEN AND PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS SWIRLED ABOUT THE CHANCEL DURING THE SERVICE. WHEN WYSZYNSKI AND CASAROLI ARRIVED AT THE CATHEDRAL, THE THROG OUTSIDE POINTEDLY CHEERED THE FORMER AS A GREAT POLISH PATRIOT.

13. IN HIS SERMON, WYSZYNSKI, GREETING CASAROLI AS THE PAPAL REPRESENTATIVE, EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE HOLY FATHER HIMSELF WILL ONE DAY BE ABLE TO VISIT POLAND. DESCRIBING THE POLISH CHURCH'S THOUSAND YEAR RECORD OF SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY DURING THE PARTITIONS WHEN THERE WAS NO STATE, WYSZYNSKI VIRTUALLY CHALLENGED THE REGIME TO EQUAL THIS RECORD. WYSZYNSKI NOTED THAT THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH'S MISSION REQUIRES OF THE HOLY SEE A DIFFERENT LEVEL OF CONCERN ACCORDING TO THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF EACH OF THE PEOPLES IT SERVES, AND ASKED CASAROLI TO CONVEY THANKS TO THE POPE FOR HIS

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EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF NORMALIZATION OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN POLAND. WYSZYNSKI CONCLUDED WITH AN APPEAL TO THE POLISH PEOPLE FOR CONFIDENCE IN THE VATICAN'S EFFORTS IN THAT REGARD. CASAROLI, FOR HIS PART, RESPONDED WITH WELL SPOKEN AND CAREFUL PLATITUDES.

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